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Immediate Release

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## **Environment Department Fines El Paso Waste Hauler \$82,000 for Violations Uncovered in Camino Real Inspections**

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) has issued a compliance order to El Paso Disposal, Inc. for 41 violations of state solid waste management laws and regulations carrying a total civil penalty of \$82,000. These violations were uncovered during a comprehensive inspection of the Camino Real Landfill in Sunland Park by NMED enforcement personnel in August.

Violations include the unauthorized transportation of special waste, attempted disposal of unauthorized special waste, failure to provide documentation of analytical and generator knowledge of special waste, and improper transportation of asbestos waste. The special waste in question was mainly medical waste from Texas hospitals, which El Paso is not registered to haul and Camino Real is not permitted to receive.

“This action should send a strong message that we will not allow Sunland Park to become a dumping ground for illegal Texas waste,” said NMED Secretary Ron Curry. “This medical waste can pose grave health hazards, especially to waste haulers and landfill workers.”

Illegal disposal of medical waste in an unpermitted facility can lead to an increased risk of contracting many blood-borne illnesses including hepatitis B and AIDS.

These violations were discovered during an enforcement crackdown at the Camino Real landfill from August 4 to August 10, 2004. These actions were at the direction of Governor Bill Richardson following an anonymous tip of illegal disposal at the Sunland Park landfill, the largest in New Mexico. Enforcement efforts included through inspections of each truckload of waste entering the landfill by teams of inspectors from the Department’s Solid Waste, Hazardous Waste, Air Quality and Occupational Health and Safety Bureaus.

Following these actions, NMED Secretary Ron Curry received assurances from the management of the Camino Real landfill that measures would be taken to prevent further illegal dumping of unpermitted waste at the facility. These assurances were made to Secretary Curry during a face-to-face meeting with Ronald J. Mittelstaedt, CEO and President of Waste Connections, Inc., in August.

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Upon receipt of this order, El Paso must immediately correct these violations if it has not already done so. The order also gives El Paso 30 days to request a hearing in this matter. A settlement conference may also be requested with any settlement reached being set forth in a stipulated final order between the parties.

For further information contact Jon Goldstein, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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